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THE EXTINCTION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE,
AND
THE CIVILIZATION OF AFRICA :

A REVIEW

OF

“THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE, AND ITS REMEDY,”
BY SIR THOMAS FOWELL BUXTON, BART.

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A REVIEW,

§c.

It was justly remarked by Archdeacon Wilberforce, in Exeter-Hall, that there exists a natural indisposition to acknowledge that an arduous work, which was supposed to have been satisfactorily accomplished, must be begun anew; and that the mind is unwilling to admit the idea of going back to the beginning, and commencing afresh the toils and exertions which were believed to be at an end. But even the Archdeacon himself, jealous as a son for his father's fair fame, is reluctantly compelled to allow, in common with all the friends of the Negro race, that the African slave-trade now prevails to a much greater extent, and inflicts on its unhappy victims a much larger amount of suffering, than ever. Notwithstanding the years of strenuous endeavour, and the millions of treasure which have been expended to secure its abolition, it is shown, too clearly to be successfully controverted, that, at least, twice as many slaves are now every year landed on the other side of the Atlantic, as were annually torn from Africa at the period when the inhuman traffic was *legally* abolished by Great Britain; and that the miseries of this increased number of slaves have been augmented in proportion to the greater difficulty and caution with which it has been prosecuted since it was proscribed as a contraband trade.

The first part of the work now under review has been upwards of twelve months before the public, and has undergone the scrutiny of all descriptions of persons; but with whatever feelings, and for whatever purposes, it may have been subjected to the ordeal of criticism, this general conclusion remains untouched. From a note in the present edition of the work, it appears that Dr. Madden is of opinion that the Author's estimate of the number of slaves annually landed in Cuba, is considerably too high; but, should this be really the case, it is to be borne in mind, that Sir Fowell Buxton does not take into his calculation the results of the slave-trade as carried on at Porto-Rico, Texas, and other places; because he was unable to give, from official returns, the exact numbers which are yearly landed there. It is, however, morally certain that those branches of the trade which he has not exhibited in arithmetical numbers, would be more than a set-off against any deduction that might be made from his

estimate with respect to Cuba, supposing that the opinion of Dr. Madden should really prove correct; and this solitary objection to one of the details does not therefore affect the general conclusion which Sir Fowell too successfully for the cause of humanity, has established. The review of the first part of his book, in our Number for May, last year, has already furnished our readers with his various calculations; and we shall, therefore, on the present occasion, only give his summary of the present fearful amount of the Christian and Mohammedan slave-trade :—

“ It is impossible for any one to reach this result, without suspecting, as well as hoping, that it must be an exaggeration; and yet there are those who think that this is too low an estimate. I have not, however, assumed any fact, without giving the data on which it rests; neither have I extracted from those data any immoderate inference. I think that the reader, on going over the calculation, will perceive that I have, in almost every instance, abated the deduction which might with justice have been made. If, then, we are to put confidence in the authorities which I have quoted, (most of them official,) we cannot avoid the conclusion, terrible as it is, that the slave-trade *annually* dooms to the horrors of slavery—

Christian	120,000	
Mohammedan	50,000	
	<hr/>	170,000
And murders—		
Christian.....	280,000	
Mohammedan	50,000	
	<hr/>	330,000
		<hr/>
		500,000 ”
		<hr/>
		(Pages 201, 202.)

In the *Prospectus* which is prefixed to this volume. a dissuasive is very properly introduced against that feeling of despondency which the affecting discovery of the present extent and enormity of the slave-trade might possibly produce in some minds. After a statement of the results of the Author's inquiries, it is argued :—

“ Let no man, however, say, that these efforts have been thrown away. Who can tell how fearful might not have been the amount of enormity, if those exertions had not been made? Who would presume to say, that the very assertion of the great principles of justice and truth has not accelerated the final extirpation of those detested practices? Who would venture to assert, that a criminal inaction on the part of Great Britain might not have caused an indefinite continuance of the guilt on the part of other nations?

“ But the people of England have not succeeded to the extent of their wishes :— Assuming it to be so, what remains to be done?—but, led on by the same Christian principles, the same devotion to truth, justice, and humanity, to continue our efforts, and to apply, if possible, other and more efficient remedies in accordance with these great principles.” (*Prospectus*, page 3.)

This is a just view of the question. Bad as the case is, it might have been much worse. Had the trade gone on unchecked, it might

have been quadrupled instead of doubled. Had no protesting voice been raised against it, that impression which has been made upon the public mind of the civilized world by an assertion of the principles of eternal truth and justice—an impression which cannot fail to accelerate the final triumph of the anti-slave-trade cause—would have had no existence. And, at all events, Britain has rolled away from herself an enormous load of guilt, which, ere this, might have brought down upon her the signal vengeance of Heaven, and have involved her in irrecoverable ruin. The unfavourable results of our past endeavours are only to be regarded as the trial of our national faith. The individual Christian, while contemplating the apparent effect produced by the maintenance of his religious principles, might sometimes be tempted to think, that evil, rather than good, is the result of his integrity. But is he therefore to chide himself on account of his past fidelity, or compromise his principles with respect to the future? Assuredly not! Neither must the Christian public of this country regard past endeavours to extinguish the slave-trade, with a feeling of regret that those endeavours should have been made; nor hesitate to renew and increase its exertions in a cause, which, if we believe our Bibles, we are bound to promote by all the legitimate means which Providence places at our command. Instead of yielding to despondency, it remains that renewed efforts be made, and “*other and more efficient remedies*” be applied, in accordance with those great principles which prompted past endeavours.

For our own part, we are strongly inclined to think, that the failure of those endeavours to accomplish the extinction of the slave-trade may be designed by divine Providence as a rebuke of the scantiness of that measure of justice which it was intended to award to Africa. It was resolved to abolish the slave-trade, and thus “*cease to do evil*” to her injured race; but the whole of the divine precept was not attended to. We did not, at the same time, resolve “*to do well*,” by making reparation to Africa for the wrongs which had been inflicted. By the countenance which had been given to the slave-trade, the attention of the natives had been diverted from the cultivation of the soil, which is now, in many places, entirely neglected, where formerly it was carried on to a great extent; lawless violence had been encouraged, and warlike and predatory habits had been cherished: and when all this amount of mischief had been effected; and when the tastes, and habits, and pursuits of the population of Africa had all been moulded and fashioned by the operation of the slave-trade,—it was then proposed to abolish the traffic by which their character had been so mainly formed, and their circumstances regulated; and thus leave them to the influence of the passions and propensities we had cherished, and (the cultivation of the soil having been neglected) destitute, to a considerable extent, of the means for engaging in a healthful and legitimate commerce. What wonder was it, that Heaven should refuse to

bestow on such an imperfect measure—good so far as it went, but so defective—the honour of extinguishing the slave-trade?

The great recommendation of the plan developed in the volume before us is, that it proposes not only to put an end to the slave-trade, but also to make substantial reparation to Africa for the miseries which she has suffered during its continuance. The Author would go at once to Africa, and pour healing balm into the wounds which our cupidity has inflicted upon her. He would enlighten her; he would call forth her latent energies, and impart to them a new and beneficial direction; and thus raise her from the depth of her degradation, and give her a place amongst the civilized nations of the earth. In this view of the subject, the extinction of the slave-trade would be only one of the many beneficial effects of the enlightenment and elevation of Africa herself; and should any persons still be found who would make the extinction of the slave-trade their almost *exclusive* aim, they would act wisely to adopt Sir Fowell Buxton's plan as the most efficacious that can be devised. Would it not be better to lay the axe at once at the root of the tree, than to content themselves with cutting off the branches as they shoot forth? Will it not be wiser to dry up the fountain in its source, than to spend their time and strength in the useless endeavour to throw dams across the stream, the only effect of which, as experience proves, is to turn it into other channels?

On the cardinal point of our national obligation to make reparation to Africa, the Author, however, shall speak for himself.

“One part of our national debt to Africa,” he says, “has already been acknowledged by the emancipation of our colonial slaves. There remains yet, however, a larger debt uncanceled,—that of restitution to Africa itself. We shall have much difficulty in ascertaining the amount of this obligation. Had we the means of discovering the total number of the sufferers whose miseries we have caused, or could we form the faintest idea of the nature and extent of the woes which are justly chargeable upon us as a nation, the duty of making reparation to Africa would be obvious.

“Next to the debt which we ourselves owe, I can form no conception of a stronger argument in favour of carrying thither civilization and Christianity, than the existence of the slave-trade itself, as it is found at this day, attended, on the one hand, by desolation; on the other, by a blind and devouring superstition; and in all directions encircled by ferocity and carnage, by torture, by terror, by all the evils through which man can be afflicted; and this variety of woes ending in the annual sacrifice of five hundred thousand human beings.

“I repeat, that a stronger proof we cannot have, that it is the duty of the people of this empire to take up the cause upon Christian grounds, as a measure of atonement for the injuries we have done to her, as the only means now within our power of making restitution to her still degraded population, and as the most successful implement for uprooting from its very foundations that gigantic and accursed tree, which for ages has nourished beneath its shadow lamentation, and mourning, and woe.

“Let but the people of this Christian country take up this cause as a duty, nationally and religiously, and no difficulties, however great, can, with the divine blessing, hinder its success.

“Nationally and religiously, the duty is plain. We have been put in trust with Christianity,—we have been the depositaries of a pure and holy faith, which inculcates the most expanded benevolence, and yet have not only neglected, as a nation, to confer upon Africa any real benefit, but have inflicted upon it a positive evil. Covetousness has dimmed our moral perceptions of duty, and paralyzed our efforts, during many generations; and, now, that the nation has awakened from its lethargy, it is high time to act up to the principles of our religion.

“Africa still lies in her blood. She wants our Missionaries, our schoolmasters, our Bibles, all the machinery we possess, for ameliorating her wretched condition. Shall we, with a remedy that may safely be applied, neglect to heal her wounds? Shall we, on whom the lamp of life shines, refuse to disperse her darkness?

“‘If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercies,’ (Phil. ii. 1,) we must awake to the duty, amidst every difficulty, of freely and liberally distributing to others those rich and abundant blessings which have been entrusted to us.” (Pages 512—514.)

“The Remedy,” the second part of Sir Fowell Buxton’s book, now for the first time published, comprises seven chapters: On Preparatory Measures,—Commerce and Cultivation,—Facilities for Commercial Intercourse,—Results of Experience,—Principles,—Elevation of Native Mind,—and, Specific Steps to be taken. The last chapter affords a kind of syllabus, and is of such convenient length, that it might be given entire; but we prefer to quote, instead of it, an extract from the “Prospectus,” already referred to, which fully and explicitly marks out the course which the “Society for the Extinction of the Slave-trade, and for the Civilization of Africa,” have bound themselves to pursue. Referring to the sentiment contained in the paragraphs which we have previously quoted, they proceed:—

“Animated by these feelings, a number of noblemen and gentlemen of all political opinions, and of Christian persuasions of divers kinds, have formed themselves into a Society for the purpose of effecting the extinction of the slave-trade; and they now call upon the public to unite their exertions for the accomplishment of this great end.

“That the British public, apprized of the extent of the enormity, and deeply feeling the guilt and misery now prevailing, will receive with favour the announcement of the formation of this Society, no doubt is entertained; but various opinions do and will exist, as to the most fitting means to be adopted for the establishment of peace and tranquillity in Africa.

“It is expedient, therefore, to state the leading principles on which this Society is formed, and the measures intended to be pursued.

“It is the unanimous opinion of this Society, that the only complete cure of all these evils is the introduction of Christianity into Africa. They do not believe that any less powerful remedy will entirely extinguish the present inducements to trade in human beings, or will afford to the inhabitants of those extensive regions a sure foundation for repose and happiness.

“But they are aware that a great variety of views may exist as to the manner in which religious instruction should be introduced: distinctly avowing, therefore, that the substitution of our pure and holy faith for the false religion, idolatry, and superstitions of Africa, is, in their firm conviction, the true ultimate remedy for the calamities that afflict her, they are most anxious to adopt every measure which

may eventually lead to the establishment of Christianity throughout that continent; and, hoping to secure the cordial co-operation of all, they proceed to declare, that the grand object of their association is, *the extinction of the slave-trade*.

"The primary object of this Society will be constantly kept in view under all circumstances of difficulty or discouragement, as the grand end to which their efforts, of whatever character, should be resolutely and unchangeably directed.

"As one of the principal means, they have cordially co-operated with Mr. Buxton in inducing Her Majesty's Government to undertake an expedition to the river Niger, with the view of obtaining the most accurate information as to the state of the countries bordering on its mighty waters.

"The immense importance of this object alone, as opening a highway into the interior of Africa, and bringing the efforts of British philanthropy into immediate contact with the numerous and populous nations it contains, will be at once perceived and acknowledged.

"It will be one of the first duties, then, of this Society, to watch over the proceedings of this expedition, to record its progress, and to digest and circulate the valuable information which it may be confidently expected to communicate.

"When this leading step has been taken, it is anticipated, that a large field for exertions of a different description will then be opened; but, desirable as such exertions may be, it must be clearly understood, that this Society, associated solely for benevolent purposes, can bear no part whatever in them. Still, in order that a comprehensive view may be taken of the whole, though each part must be accomplished by agencies entirely distinct, it may be expedient to state some of the expectations which are entertained.

"One most important department must entirely rest with Her Majesty's Government,—the formation of treaties with the native rulers of Africa for the suppression of the slave-trade. Such treaties, however, will not be carried into execution, unless those wants which have hitherto been supplied from the profits arising from the sale of the natives, should be satisfied through the means of legitimate commerce. It may appear expedient to the Government to obtain from the Chiefs the possession of some convenient districts which may be best adapted to carrying on trade with safety and success; and, when this is effected, another and wholly distinct Society may perhaps be formed, for the purpose of aiding in the cultivation of those districts, and of promoting the growth of those valuable products for which the soil of those countries is peculiarly fitted.

"The present Society can take part in no plan of colonization or of trade. Its objects are, and must be, exclusively pacific and benevolent; but it may, by encouragement, and by the diffusion of information, most materially aid in the civilization of Africa, and so pave the way for the successful exertions of others, whether they be directed to colonization and the cultivation of the soil, or to commercial intercourse, or to that which is immeasurably superior to them all,—the establishment of the Christian faith on the continent of Africa.

"At home, this Society will direct its vigilant attention to all which may arise with respect to the traffic in slaves, and give publicity to whatever may be deemed most essential to produce its suppression.

"In Africa, there are various means whereby it may effectually work to the same end. One of the great impediments at present existing to the advancement of knowledge, is the state of the native languages of Western and Central Africa.

"Amongst the many nations which inhabit those regions, there are certainly many different dialects, and not improbably several leading languages. A few only of those languages have yet been reduced into writing; and, consequently, the difficulty of holding intercourse with the natives, and imparting knowledge to them, is greatly increased. By the adoption of effectual measures for reducing the principal languages of Western and Central Africa into writing, a great obstacle to the diffu-

sion of information will be removed, and facility afforded for the introduction of the truths of Christianity.

“ There is another subject, of no light importance, which would legitimately fall within the views of this institution. In Africa, medical science can scarcely be said to exist ; yet in no part of the world is it more profoundly respected. As at present understood by the natives, it is intimately connected with the most inveterate and barbarous superstitions ; and its artful practitioners, owing their superiority to this popular ignorance, may be expected to interpose the most powerful obstacles to the diffusion of Christianity and of science.

“ To encourage, therefore, the introduction of more enlightened views on this subject, to prevent or mitigate the prevalence of disease and suffering among the people of Africa, and to secure the aid of medical science generally to the beneficent objects of African civilization, must be considered of immense importance ; nor would its benefits be confined to the native population. It is equally applicable to the investigation of the climate and localities of that country. To render Africa a salubrious residence for European constitutions may be a hopeless task ; but to diminish the danger, to point out the means whereby persons proceeding thither may most effectually guard against its perils, may, perhaps, be effected ; nor must it be forgotten, that, in however humble a degree this advantage can be attained, its value cannot be too highly appreciated.

“ Various other measures may come within the legitimate scope of this institution. It may be sufficient to recapitulate a few : The encouragement of practical science, in all its various branches. The system of drainage best calculated to succeed in a climate so humid and so hot, would be an invaluable boon to all who frequent that great continent, whatever might be their purpose. Though this Society would not embark in agriculture, it might afford essential assistance to the natives, by furnishing them with useful information as to the best mode of cultivation ; as to the productions which command a steady market, and by introducing the most approved agricultural implements and seeds. The time may come, when the knowledge and practice of the mighty powers of steam might contribute rapidly to promote the improvement and prosperity of that country.

“ Even matters of comparatively less moment may engage the attention of the Society. It may assist in promoting the formation of roads and canals. The manufacture of paper, and the use of the printing-press, if once established in Africa, will be amongst the most powerful auxiliaries in the dispersion of ignorance, and the destruction of barbarism.

“ It is hoped that enough has now been stated, to justify the Society in calling for the aid and co-operation of all who hold in just abhorrence the iniquitous traffic in human beings ; of all who deeply deplore the awful crimes which have so long afflicted, and still continue to devastate, Africa ; of all who remember with deep sorrow and contrition that share which Great Britain so long continued to have in producing those scenes of bloodshed and of guilt. A variety of collateral means has thus been suggested, sufficiently important and interesting to demonstrate the necessity of a distinct Society, and to entitle it to the best wishes and firmest support of every sincere friend of Africa.” (Pages 3—9.)

It is gratifying to discover, that the Author and his friends set out upon the principle, that Christianity is the primary means of civilization. Had they not duly recognised this principle, they might have met with a disappointment similar to that which was experienced in America, as the result of endeavours to civilize the native Indian population. Persevering efforts to raise a barbarous people to the condition of civilized nations,

without the application of the Gospel, were made on a grand scale in the United States; but the experiment completely failed: and the removal of the Indians to the far west was then resolved upon, on the assumed principle, that they were incapable of being trained and fitted to hold peaceful, beneficial intercourse with their civilized white neighbours. Most erroneous was the conclusion to which the disappointed philanthropists of America came; for some of those very tribes which were thus given up as irreclaimable, were afterwards, under the teaching of Christian Missionaries, elevated and civilized. But that whole history serves to show how important it is, that a work of philanthropy be commenced upon sound principles, that we may be saved from the temptation to abandon the work itself as impracticable, when success is withheld from ill-judged measures.

On the primary importance of Christianity, Sir Fowell, however, shall speak for himself.

"The Gospel," he argues, "ever has been, and ever must be, the grand civilizer of mankind. Happily for Africa, a mass of evidence is to be found, corroborative of this assertion, in the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, in the sessions 1833 and 1834, on the Aborigines Question; appointed to consider, amongst other things, 'what measures ought to be adopted to promote the spread of civilization among the Aborigines of our colonies, and to lead them to the peaceful and voluntary reception of the Christian religion.' A main branch of that inquiry was, 'whether the experience of the several Missionary Societies led to the belief, that it would be advisable to begin with civilization, in order to introduce Christianity, or with Christianity, in order to lead to civilization.' It is a striking fact, that the representatives of the Missionary bodies who were examined on that occasion, without any previous concert between themselves on the subject of the inquiry, arrived at precisely the same conclusion; namely, 'that there is no means so effectual, under the divine blessing, to benefit man for the life that now is, as well as that which is to come, as Christianity.' " (Pages 502, 503.)

Having given copious extracts from the evidence of Messrs. Coates, Beecham, and Ellis, the Missionary Secretaries referred to in the preceding quotation, and also of Mr. Elisha Bates, a member of the Society of Friends in America, he thus concludes:—

"From these facts, gathered from different sources, the inference does not appear by any means doubtful, that, whatever methods may be attempted for ameliorating the condition of untutored man, THIS alone can penetrate to the root of the evil, can teach him to love and to befriend his neighbour, and cause him to act as a candidate for a higher and holier state of being.

"The hope, therefore, of effecting Africa's civilization, and of inducing her tribes to relinquish the trade in man, is, without this assistance, utterly vain. This mighty lever, when properly applied, can alone overturn the iniquitous systems which prevail throughout that continent. Let Missionaries and Schoolmasters, the plough and the spade, go together, and agriculture will flourish; the avenues to legitimate commerce will be opened; confidence between man and man will be inspired; whilst civilization will advance as the natural effect, and Christianity operate as the proximate cause, of this happy change." (Pages 510, 511.)

Had Sir Fowell Buxton, and the Society which he has had the honour of originating, confined themselves, like the philanthropists of a former day, simply and exclusively to the extinction of the slave-trade, we are not prepared to say that that object might not, after all, have been accomplished, to a considerable extent, without the direct application of the Gospel. It is a fact which deserves to be noticed, that, wherever British settlements have been planted in Africa, the slave-trade has been stopped. This is the case at Sierra-Leone, the Gambia, and the Gold-Coast, on the western side of Africa; and on the south-eastern coast, so far as the influence of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope extends, say for one thousand miles, the slave-trade has no existence; but no sooner do we get within the range of Portuguese influence, than immediately the accursed traffic is again discoverable, in all its horrors. Such striking facts may possibly warrant the conclusion, that were British settlements, for the purposes of legitimate commerce, multiplied along the coasts of Africa, the slave-trade would thereby be greatly diminished. But its suppression, by such a process, would not meet the whole case of Africa. Her population would not be elevated and civilized by such means. The interior might, notwithstanding, remain a theatre of blood, on which the most dreadful scenes would still be perpetrated; for the reason that the slave-trade is not the only cause of the native wars. In this edition, Sir Fowell has greatly enriched the first part of his work, by adding a chapter on the *superstitions and cruelties of the Africans*. And we may remark, that these fruitful sources of misery would remain, were the slave-trade abolished on such a limited plan as we are now supposing. In places where the slave-trade might be extinguished, simply by the influence of British commercial settlements on the coast, the native African would remain, notwithstanding, a fierce and uncivilized barbarian. Legitimate commerce will not, of itself, civilize; and abundance of evidence could be adduced, were it necessary, to show that, in parts of Africa, where an innocent commerce, instead of the traffic in human flesh, has been carried on during the last thirty years, the natives remain as much as ever under the influence of their cruel and demoralizing customs and superstitions.

To meet the entire case of Africa, and to make suitable reparation for the wrongs which we have inflicted upon her by the encouragement of the slave-trade, the introduction of Christianity, it thus appears, is indispensably necessary. That alone can break the influence which superstition now exerts upon the native mind, and introduce the peaceful and tender humanities into social and domestic life; and in the course of this regenerating process, the extinction of the slave-trade will take place as one only of the delightful results of true civilization.

There is yet, however, another view under which the importance of Christianity might be argued. Without it, the domestic slavery of Africa

cannot be extinguished. The Author's plan has, indeed, been objected to, on the ground that it will cherish domestic slavery; and that may possibly be its *apparent* tendency *for a time*; but it is far less open to the objection than any other scheme which has yet been submitted to the public. The objection would seem to rest upon the principle, that African domestic slavery is merely a concomitant of the foreign slave-trade, and that it would soon die away, were the slave-trade itself abolished. A more erroneous view of the subject could not possibly be entertained. Domestic slavery enters into the genius of African polity, and is interwoven with the entire social and domestic superstructure. By whatever method, then, the foreign slave-trade might be extinguished, this great evil would remain untouched, unless, at the same time, means should be employed to change the African character. The native Kings and Chiefs would still have the time, the service, and the lives of their slaves at their absolute disposal; and would employ them in the cultivation of the ground, or in any other way which would provide for themselves the means of sustenance, and minister to their wants and gratification. If, then, the plan of Mr. Turnbull and others should be carried into effect, and the slave-trade should be abolished simply by cutting off the *demand* on the other side of the Atlantic, the domestic slavery of Africa would remain the same. The labours of the slaves might be partly directed into a new channel; but they would remain slaves still, wholly at the beck of their imperious lords. This, we say, would be the inevitable result of such a plan; because it is not framed with a view to operate *directly* upon Africa herself, and effect a change in the African character. Mr. Turnbull calculates that his plan will *indirectly* promote legitimate commerce and industry in Africa; but, should this be the case, it would be more likely that domestic slavery would be thereby encouraged,—than on the Author's plan, which is to be worked out, not on the other side of the Atlantic, but in Africa itself; which will embrace every provision that prudence can dictate for discountenancing domestic slavery, and affording encouragement to free labour; and which, above all, contemplates the general diffusion of the Christian religion. If this grand and comprehensive scheme be fully carried into effect, and the African despot be taught to recognise, and treat as a *brother*, the abject slave who now trembles at his frown, the final and complete extinction of domestic slavery will follow as another of its legitimate results. But let all parties be solemnly assured, that, by whatever means the foreign slave-trade may be eventually abolished, unless the Gospel be fully and fairly applied, and the native character be moulded and fashioned anew by Christianity, domestic slavery will continue to crush the far greater portion of the population of Africa.

The African Society, as we will designate the new institution, for the sake of brevity, do not, however, propose to teach Christianity, *directly*

and *immediately*, by an agency of their own. "Distinctly avowing, that the substitution of our pure and holy faith for the false religion, idolatry, and superstitions of Africa, is, in their firm conviction, the true ultimate remedy for the calamities that afflict her;" they, notwithstanding, devolve upon others the task of providing the appointed means for its introduction and diffusion. At first sight, the course which they mark out for themselves may appear somewhat contradictory to the views they express; but, on consideration, it will be found, that the Society have been guided by sound wisdom, in the practical conclusion which they have adopted. The attempt would have been hopeless, to frame a common method of Christian instruction, which a Society, composed of individuals of so many different religious persuasions, could agree to adopt. The same reasons which attach them, as individuals, to their own respective creeds and modes of worship, would naturally have prevented them from concurring in a common standard of doctrine and form of worship for Africa. And, after all, it is better that the work of Christian instruction should be left to Missionary bodies. The dissemination of the Gospel will be accomplished much more effectually by institutions formed for that express purpose, than by a Society which should have a multiplicity of objects in view. Had the African Society proposed to impart Christian instruction by agents of their own, the work of Christianizing the African could only have shared their attention with many other departments of useful exertion; but Missionary Societies devote to this work their undivided attention and care, and are, consequently, the most likely agents to prosecute it with vigour and success. And, more than this, their agents will obtain more readily the confidence of the African. Making it their one business to promote his spiritual and eternal interests, they will more easily convince him that they have no sinister ends in view, but that they are really his friends, intent on promoting his welfare, than as if they were mixed up and identified with commercial plans and undertakings.

But, although the African Society, for weighty reasons, does not impose upon itself the task of imparting religious instruction, it will prove a powerful coadjutor to Missionary Societies, and, *indirectly*, at least, contribute in many ways to the spread of Christianity in Africa. This will appear, as we proceed with the examination of its plans.

The expedition to the Niger is the first specific measure which demands attention. Where shall the work of African civilization be commenced? was the question which presented itself, as soon as it was determined that the extinction of the slave-trade should be sought by the regeneration of Africa herself. The plan of commencing on the western coast, where British settlements already exist, and of penetrating from thence into the interior, was not destitute of plausibility; but it was preferred to aim, *in the first instance*, directly at the heart of Africa, and begin with the countries contiguous to the Niger. It redounds greatly to the credit of Her

Majesty's Ministers, that they entered cordially into the philanthropic scheme; and, early in the present session, recommended to Parliament that an exploratory expedition should be dispatched to the Niger, for the purpose of collecting information, and otherwise facilitating the work of African civilization. An extract of a letter, under date December 26th, 1839, from the Right Honourable Lord John Russell, to the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, which is given in the Appendix to this volume, will be read with interest; as explanatory of the important objects which, in the apprehension of the Government, this expedition will be calculated to accomplish. Having dwelt at length on the increase of the slave-trade, in defiance of all the means hitherto used to prevent it, his Lordship proceeds:—

“Her Majesty's confidential advisers are therefore compelled to admit the conviction, that it is indispensable to enter upon some new preventive system, calculated to arrest the foreign slave-trade in its source, by counteracting the principles by which it is now sustained. Although it may be impossible to check the cupidity of those who purchase slaves for exportation from Africa, it may yet be possible to force on those by whom they are sold the persuasion, that they are engaged in a traffic opposed to their own interests, when correctly understood.

“With this view, it is proposed to establish new commercial relations with those African Chiefs or powers within whose dominions the internal slave-trade of Africa is carried on, and the external slave-trade supplied with its victims. To this end, the Queen has directed her Ministers to negotiate conventions or agreements with those Chiefs and powers, the basis of which conventions would be, first, the abandonment and absolute prohibition of the slave-trade; and, secondly, the admission for consumption in this country, on favourable terms, of goods, the produce or manufacture of the territories subject to them. Of those Chiefs, the most considerable rule over the countries adjacent to the Niger, and its great tributary streams. It is therefore proposed, to dispatch an expedition, which would ascend that river by steam-boats, as far as the points at which it receives the confluence of some of the principal rivers falling into it from the eastward. At these, or at any other, stations which may be found more favourable for the promotion of a legitimate commerce, it is proposed to establish British factories, in the hope that the natives may be taught that there are methods of employing the population more profitable to those to whom they are subject, than that of converting them into slaves, and selling them for exportation to the slave-traders.

“In this communication, it would be out of place, and, indeed, impracticable, to enter upon a full detail of the plan itself; of the ulterior measures to which it may lead, or of the reasons which induce Her Majesty's Government to believe that it may eventually lead to the substitution of an innocent and profitable commerce, for that traffic by which the continent of Africa has so long been desolated. For my immediate purpose, it will be sufficient to say, that, having maturely weighed these questions, and with a full perception of the difficulties which may attend this undertaking, the Ministers of the Crown are yet convinced that it affords the best, if not the only, prospect of accomplishing the great object so earnestly desired by the Queen, by her Parliament, and her people.

“Having instituted a careful inquiry as to the best and most economical method of conducting the proposed expedition, I find, from the enclosed communication from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that it will be necessary to build three iron steam-vessels for this service, and that the first cost of those vessels,

including provisions and stores for six months, will amount to £35,000. It further appears, that the annual charge of paying and victualling the officers and men will be £10,546. The salaries of the conductors of the expedition, and of their Chaplain and Surgeon, will probably amount to £4,000. In addition to this expenditure, presents must be purchased for the Chiefs, and tents, mathematical instruments, with some other articles of a similar kind, will be indispensable, for the use of the persons who are to be engaged in this service, when at a distance from their vessels. I have some time since given directions for the completion of this additional estimate; but with those directions it has not hitherto been found practicable to comply. The charge for this branch of the proposed service will not be very considerable.

“I have to convey to your Lordships my recommendation, that, in the estimates to be laid before the House of Commons, for the services of the year 1840, the sums be included which are necessary to provide for the expenses of the proposed expedition to the Niger, on the scale already mentioned, under the several heads of expenditure.”

Three steam-vessels, of suitable dimensions, and planned with a special adaptation to this service, are already, we understand, in an advanced state of preparation; and the expedition is expected to sail from this country in the autumn of the present year, so as to reach the Niger at the season most favourable for the prosecution of its important objects. A more momentous undertaking, or one calculated to awaken a deeper interest in the enlightened and philanthropic mind, it is difficult to conceive. Never was an expedition sent to Africa to prepare the way for the execution of such magnificent plans for the advancement of her welfare; and its arrival on her shores will form an epoch in her history, a period to be remembered in all future time. Considering the difficulties which will have to be surmounted, the delicate nature of the negotiations to be conducted, and the mighty interests involved in this expedition,—it is cause of no ordinary satisfaction, that its management is confided to officers whose high professional skill and extensive experience, combined with elevated Christian philanthropy, warrant the expectation, that, under the furthering blessing of Heaven, the expedition will answer the end for which it is designed, and prove the harbinger of incalculable good to Africa.

When the expedition shall have accomplished its task, when the most suitable localities for the commencement of operations shall have been ascertained, and friendly treaties with the Kings and Chiefs have been made, and correct information obtained,—another Association, it appears, will be formed for the purpose of carrying out the agricultural and commercial plans which it may be deemed proper to adopt. This was contemplated as a requisite measure at the period of the formation of the Society. At the meeting of noblemen and gentlemen, held at the Right Honourable Stephen Lushington's, in the month of July, last year, after it had been agreed, on the motion of the Bishop of London, “That an Institution be formed, having for its primary object, the extinction of the

slave trade, by adopting means for civilizing Africa, and encouraging and protecting the cultivation of the soil, and legitimate commerce," it was resolved, in the second place,—“ That it may be of the utmost importance to the suppression of the slave-trade, and the civilization of Africa, that an Institution for agricultural purposes, wholly distinct from the Institution named in the first Resolution, shall be formed; and that a Provisional Committee be appointed for the consideration of the subject.” It was then understood, that a number of gentlemen, participating in Sir Fowell Buxton's views and sentiments, were prepared to advance, on their own responsibility and risk, the capital necessary for carrying his measures into effect; being fully persuaded, that those measures would indirectly advance the commercial interests of this country, at the same time that they would confer upon Africa herself the blessings and comforts of civilized life.

The specific objects to be accomplished by this second Association are described by the Author, in his concluding chapter. He there proposes the formation of an Agricultural Company,

—“ which shall, hereafter, send out persons well acquainted with tropical climates and productions; to form settlements, guided by such arrangements and treaties as the Government may have made; to commence pattern-farms and establish factories, well supplied with European goods; in a word, to use all the means that experience may point out, for a profitable and successful employment of British skill and capital in the African continent. *No slavery, no monopoly, forbearance towards the natives, and utter enmity towards the slave-trade and slavery in all their forms*, must be the fundamental principles of such a company; and an honest adherence to these will, in my full belief, insure its prosperity and profit.”

It must be distinctly understood, that this plan does not contemplate the colonization of Africa, by emigration from this country. Had the African Society proposed such an object, and sought to attain it, either directly, by the application of its own resources, or indirectly, by means of the “Agricultural Company” hereafter to be formed, it would not have had the countenance of many parties who are now pledged to its support. It is not intended that white people shall obtain the proprietorship of the soil; and that the natives shall be employed in its cultivation only as servants, the fruits of whose labours are to be enjoyed by their white masters. To teach the natives to cultivate their own soil, and draw out the natural resources of their country for their own benefit, is the primary object of the Society; and the “profit” which the Agricultural Company is to derive from the undertaking, is dwelt upon by the Author for the purpose of showing that an adequate remuneration for the capital employed in promoting this benevolent undertaking, will result from the legitimate trade and commerce that will spring up as the Africans advance in civilization. Sir Fowell does not seek to secure the aid of commercial and trading capitalists, by telling them that Africa is a fine field for

colonization, that the land may be bought cheap, and that native labour may be obtained at a low rate. He sets out upon a very different principle, and assures them, that if they will help him to raise Africa from the dust, and impart to her degraded and afflicted sons the advantages of civilization, they will not only participate in the pure and elevated reward which philanthropy derives from witnessing the happiness of those whom her exertions have blessed, but that they will have an additional recompence for their work of mercy in that advancement of our commercial interests, as a nation, which will be the result of their successful endeavours to benefit others.

Let not, then, the apprehension be entertained, that the Author and his friends intend the colonization of Africa by whites. Their plan for elevating Africa is not to secure the land for our own redundant population, and then place the natives in subjection to a foreign race. This would have completely defeated their benevolent object. It would have been, in fact, something like a contradiction in terms, to propose to civilize and elevate Africa, by giving the soil to others, and reducing her sons to a state of servitude: and had they, indeed, absurdly proposed to accomplish their professedly benevolent object by such a method, it could not possibly have been carried into effect. The climate of Western and Central Africa, so unfriendly to European life, affords a sufficient protection against all schemes of colonization. In the settlements and factories which may be formed, some white agents will undoubtedly be needed to direct and superintend the operations which may be carried on; but the principal agents employed must be of African origin. "Agents to be obtained," is the heading of one of the sections of the sixth chapter of this volume, under which Sir Fowell expresses himself to the following effect:—

"We have already seen the desirableness of educating and civilizing the inhabitants of Africa; and a number of facts have been brought to light, tending to show, that there is at least as great a readiness on their part to receive instruction, as on ours to communicate it; the question now remains,—Who are to be the instructors? The climate is generally viewed as unfavourable to Europeans, and this being the case, I have great satisfaction in finding, that, from among the liberated Africans in our West Indian colonies, we are likely to be furnished with a number of persons, in whom are united the desirable qualifications of fitness for the climate, competency to act as Teachers, and willingness to enter upon the work.

"An important feature of the present time is this, that the exertions of the Missionaries in the West Indies are beginning to tell on their converts in the Missionary spirit which they have imparted. There is a feeling in the hearts of our emancipated Negroes towards the land of their origin, which seems to have arisen spontaneously in various congregations." (Pages 491, 492.)

The Author then states, that in the month of December last, in the hope that openings would, ere long, occur for the employment of native agents, he caused a letter to be addressed to the heads of Missionary Societies, inquiring whether trustworthy persons could be found among

the Christian natives at their respective stations in the West Indies, who would be well qualified to instruct the Aboriginal population around the settlements which may be formed in Africa, in the cultivation of the soil, and in the various arts and pursuits of civilized life; and he furnishes some of the answers which he received to his inquiries,—answers which encourage the hope, that many of the sons of Africa, whom the slave-trade had torn away from her soil,—or, at all events, many of their descendants,—will become the instruments in the hand of Providence for enlightening and elevating Africa herself. Doubtless the Mission stations in the West Indies, and also at Sierra-Leone, and other parts of Western Africa, will eventually furnish a host of native agents, who, from their adaptation to the climate, and their intimate acquaintance with the native character, will be much better qualified for this work of philanthropy than agents sent from this country.

Having promoted the expedition to the Niger, and otherwise secured the aid of Government, and having originated and set to work an “Agricultural Company,” it appears that the African Society will then employ its energies in collecting and publishing information relative to the slave-trade; in endeavouring to reduce the languages and dialects of Africa into writing, and to introduce the manufacture of paper, and the use of the press; in the promotion of medical science among the natives; in encouraging practical science, in all its branches; in introducing approved methods of drainage; in the formation of roads and canals; and in other works of general utility. Thus, although the African Society will not *directly* engage either in Missionary enterprise, or in commercial undertakings, it will reserve to itself a glorious field for philanthropic exertion, in which it may expend, most beneficially for Africa, all the funds which British liberality may place at its disposal, and indirectly facilitate both the Missionary and the commercial plans which may be formed for the promotion of African civilization.

It will obviously be able to furnish great facilities for the prosecution of Missionary plans. It may open the way, to some extent, for the introduction of the Gospel into the heart of Africa. We do not forget that Missionaries have frequently proved the pioneers of trade and commerce. We remember, that Missionaries have often gone with safety, where it would be perilous for the merchant or scientific traveller to venture. But we cannot close our eyes against the fact, that the discoveries of science, and the enterprises of commerce, have, in other cases, prepared the way for the march of the Gospel. Some of the most splendid results of modern Missionary efforts are exhibited in the islands and groups of the South Pacific Ocean; but, is it probable, that those triumphs of the Cross would have been realized, had it not been for the discoveries of Captain Cook, or some other navigator? What Missionary Society would have fitted out an expedition, and sent Missionaries in search of islands and groups,

of the existence of which there was no intimation? And would the Wesleyan Missionary Society, at this moment, have had its way laid open to the capital of Ashantee, supposing there had been no British settlement at Cape-Coast? Arguing from the past, it may fairly be anticipated, that the expedition to the Niger, which is now fitting out with the philanthropic object of promoting the welfare of Africa, will, by the furthering blessing of Heaven, become the means of pointing out the path to most interesting fields of Missionary labour. Thus, although we hold, most unwaveringly, the principle, that the Gospel is the only effectual civilizer of barbarous men, we can most consistently cherish the anticipation, that the way for its introduction into the interior of Africa may be, in some sort, prepared by the expedition in question.

Nor will the African Society merely open the way for Missionaries: it will prove a powerful auxiliary when they have actually entered the field. So far as it may succeed in reducing the native dialects to writing, and in introducing the use of the press; so far as it may lessen the unhealthiness of the climate, by promoting drainage and the cultivation of the soil; so far as it may furnish superior means of communication by the construction of roads and canals;—to the same extent will it facilitate the operations of Missionary Societies. And great must be the impetus which will be given to the cause of Christianity in the interior of Africa by the employment of Christian and well-instructed Negroes, brought from the Mission stations on the coast, or in the West Indies. The formation of settlements, composed of such individuals, in which the ordinances of religion shall be duly administered, will be like planting so many churches in the midst of the moral desert of Africa, and bidding them “arise and shine,” for the benefit of the surrounding tribes and nations.

And there is another mode in which the African Society will facilitate the Missionary work. By its means the Missionaries will be relieved, to a great extent, from the task which now, of necessity, devolves upon them, of instructing their converts from Heathenism in the arts and pursuits of civilized life—an employment which makes inroads upon their time, and not unfrequently exposes them to the calumnies of worldly men, who endeavour to excite suspicion respecting their motives, and would make it appear that they are actuated by a love of lucre. But the African Society will interpose in this respect in behalf of Missionaries. It will take upon itself the task of promoting agriculture, the arts, and healthful commerce; and will leave the Missionaries at liberty to pursue, without interruption, their own proper and spiritual work, and thus protect them from the calumnies by which designing men of the world endeavour to injure their character in public estimation.

In the preface to his “Remedy,” Sir Fowell has remarked upon the objection which has been made to those passages in his book, in which he advises that our squadron may, for the present, be rendered more

efficient; and that the settlements which may be formed should be protected by the British Government. A certain class of his friends have objected to the employment of an armed force, even for protection, and would have none but moral means resorted to for the suppression of the slave-trade. How fully and satisfactorily he meets this objection, will be seen from the following extract :—

“ I have no wish to disguise my sentiments about armed force. I deprecate, as much as any man, resorting to violence and war. These are against the whole tenor of my views. It will be admitted, I think, that I have laboured hard in this book to show, that our great error has been, that we have depended far too much upon physical force. It is, however, the duty of our Government to see that the peace of our settlements be preserved. The natives, whom we induce to engage in agriculture, must not be exposed to the irruption of a savage banditti, instigated by some miscreant from Europe, whose vessel waits upon the shore for a human cargo. Nor must our runaway sailors repeat in Africa the atrocities which have been practised in New-Zealand. Again and again the Foulah tribes said to the Missionaries on the river Gambia, ‘ Give us security, and we will gladly till the land, and pasture the cattle in your neighbourhood.’ There were no means of thus protecting them; and hence an experiment, founded on admirable principles, failed. But when I ask for an effectual police force, I ask for that only. I do not desire the employment of such a military force as might be perverted into the means of war and conquest. I want only, that the man engaged in lawful and innocent employment in Africa, should have the same protection as an agricultural labourer or a mechanic receives in England; and that there, as well as here, the murderer and man-stealer may be arrested and punished.” (Preface, pages iii, iv.)

Although we have occupied considerable space in remarking upon the plan developed in this volume, we cannot close our notice of the momentous subject, without presenting to our readers the concluding arguments by which the Author recommends it to general consideration.

He conceives that this country now occupies a peculiarly favourable position in the eyes of the world; and that, having made such sacrifices for the abolition of slavery in our own colonies, we can now address ourselves in earnest to the task of abolishing the slave-trade, without exciting the suspicion that we are actuated by sinister motives.

“ England is at peace. Since the abolition of the slave-trade by Great Britain, it is not too much to say, that there has been, both at home and amongst many of the nations of the Continent, an increase of a benevolent and enlightened spirit. Our sincerity, with regard to the slave-trade, has been established, by sacrifices which admit of no misconstruction. The principles involved in that great measure have been carried out by the abolition of slavery, and by the willingness of the nation to pay the price of that most costly act of duty. Thus, then, we are in a condition (our own hands being clean) to ask the co-operation of France, Russia, the United States, and other great powers; and we have a right to demand from Spain, Portugal, and Brazil, that they should no longer delay the execution of their engagements.” (Page 523.)

The discoveries which have been made in Africa, and the preparation in our West Indian colonies of suitable agents for the work of African civilization, are dwelt upon as encouraging circumstances.

“Again : there are certain circumstances which render Africa far more accessible than at any former period. We now know the course of the Niger ; and an entrance into the centre of Africa is opened, by means of this noble river. We have now got, in steam, a power which enables us to traverse it ; to pass rapidly through the unhealthy parts of it ; to ascend it against the current ; in short, to command its navigation.

“Beyond and besides all these, there is another circumstance lately brought into existence, which may supply us with the necessary agents, capable of enduring the African climate. I wish not, with too sanguine an eye, to anticipate the course of events ; but I cannot help believing, as I have elsewhere stated, that, in the present condition of the Negro race in our West Indian colonies, lies one of the best hopes of Africa. They are rising, under the influence of freedom, education, and religion, to a rank which will fit them to be messengers of peace to the land from which their fathers were torn ; and already, though the time has been so short, various distinct and unconcerted symptoms have appeared, proving that ‘it pitieth them to see her in the dust.’

“At the moment, then, that a highway is discovered into the heart of Africa, and that a new power is placed in our hands, enabling us to command its navigation, and that agents present themselves, qualified, by physical constitution, to endure the climate, and, by intellectual cultivation, to carry with them the seeds of true improvement ; at that moment, we learn the utter fallacy and inutility of the system for the suppression of the slave-trade which we have hitherto been pursuing.” (Pages 523—525.)

The argument in favour of the civilization of Africa, derived from the beneficial bearing which it would have on our own commercial interests, is next urged.

“But there is another consideration, though quite of a different order, which bears strongly upon this point. New markets for the sale of our manufactured articles are urgently required, at a time when we are excluded from some of our accustomed channels of sale.

“Nor is the supply of the raw material less important : new fields for its growth ought to be opened, in proportion to the increasing consumption of the world. I firmly believe, that, if commercial countries consulted only their true interests, without reference to motives of a higher character, they would make the most resolute and persevering attempts to raise up Africa ; *not to divide her broad territory amongst them*, nor to enslave her people, but in order to elevate her into something like an equality with themselves, for their reciprocal benefit.” (Page 525.)

Then follows a powerful appeal to the best feelings of humanity, and to our national sense of duty, in favour of instant, strenuous, and persevering efforts, in despite of the difficulties and delay which may reasonably be anticipated ; which appeal is urged by a consideration of the vastness of the benefit those efforts may instrumentally confer on Africa.

“But I am well aware, that it is a case in which we must act under circumstances of considerable discouragement ; and especially that of our great ignorance with regard to the real internal condition of Africa, both physical and moral.

“ Upon any other subject, the dimness of our knowledge would supply an answerable reason for pausing ; but the state of Africa admits of no delay. The complicated horrors which are crowded into the space of a single month furnish sufficient reasons for all possible dispatch, and for adventuring on measures which, under other circumstances, would be premature, and probably rash. Better to fall into a thousand errors in the detail, and to incur the expense and mortification of the miscarriages they will cause, than to sit still, and leave Africa to her woful fate.

“ If nothing be done, Africa will be, at the end of fifty or a hundred years, what she now is, and we shall still be as ill-informed as we now are of the readiest means for her relief. But if we grapple with the evil, we shall either find ourselves in the right road, or grope our way to it ; and the very mistakes we now make will serve to direct us aright hereafter.

“ I am not so sanguine as to suppose that we can at once, by a single effort, solve the problem which lies before us. The deliverance of Africa will put our patience and perseverance to no ordinary trial. We must deliberately make up our minds to large and long-continued expense, to persevering labours, and to severe disappointments. I wish not in any degree to conceal from myself, or from others, these truths.

“ But the question is, Shall such an experiment be made ? There are two mighty arguments which should prompt us to such an undertaking : the intense miseries of Africa, and the peculiar blessings which have been showered upon this country by the mercy of divine Providence. With regard to the first, I need not again plunge into the sickening details of the horrors which accompany this bloody trade, and of the sanguinary rites which there bear the name of religion. Whether we look to the vast space which is there made a theatre of public misery, or calculate how many deeds of cruelty and carnage must be perpetrated every day in the year, in order to make up the surprising total of human distress, which, by indisputable documents, we know to be realized, there is enough to awaken the deepest pity, and to arouse the most energetic resolution.

“ Turning to the second consideration, we cannot fail to see how signally this nation has been preserved, and led forward to an extent of power and prosperity, beyond what almost any other nation has been permitted to reach. ‘ It is not to be doubted, that this country has been invested with wealth and power, with arts and knowledge, with the sway of distant lands, and the mastery of the restless waters, for some great and important purpose in the government of the world. Can we suppose otherwise than that it is our office to carry civilization and humanity, peace and good government, and, above all, the knowledge of the true God, to the uttermost end of the earth ? ’*

“ Since that passage was written, Great Britain has refuted the idle, yet once the all-but-universal, doctrine, that confusion, havoc, and bloodshed must follow the extinction of slavery. And with this doctrine of universal convulsion has also fallen the allegation, that Negroes will not work, except under the impulse of the whip. It is confessed, by every authority, that wages have charmed away what used to be called ‘ the natural and incurable indolence of the African.’ I do not say a single word here upon the controverted question, whether the Negroes demand excessive remuneration. We may assume, for the sake of argument, that they are exorbitant. This may be a fault, though, under all the circumstances, not an unnatural or surprising one ; but this does not touch my assertion, grounded upon all the papers which have been produced to Parliament, that, when satisfied with the rate of wages, they do labour industriously, and execute more work, in better style, and in less time, than when they were slaves. There never was a greater delusion than that Negroes could not be induced to work for money.

* “ The Rev. Mr. Whewell’s Sermon before the Trinity Board.”

"A nobler achievement now invites us. I believe that Great Britain can, if she will, under the favour of the Almighty, confer a blessing on the human race. It may be that, at her bidding, a thousand nations now steeped in wretchedness, in brutal ignorance, in devouring superstition, possessing but one trade, and that one the foulest evil that ever blighted public prosperity, or poisoned domestic peace, shall, under British tuition, emerge from their debasement, enjoy a long line of blessings,—education, agriculture, commerce, peace, industry, and the wealth that springs from it; and, far above all, shall willingly receive that religion which, while it confers innumerable temporal blessings, opens the way to an eternal futurity of happiness.

"I have already confessed, that I am not experienced or skilful in matters which touch the commercial part of the question. I tread this ground with diffidence. I say no more, than that it appears to me that, the soil in Africa being rich, and the people being found upon it, it is not advisable to carry them to a distance. It is possible, however, that some fallacy, unsuspected by me, may lurk under my theory, if theory of mine it can be called; but when I come to humanity, justice, and the duties of Christian men, I stand upon a rock. It may be, or it may not, that while we act under the impulse of charity to the most afflicted of mankind, we are also obeying the dictates of the most far-sighted policy, and the most refined ambition. It may prove, or it may not, that, while we are leading Africa to grow at home cheaper sugar than Brazil, and cheaper cotton than the United States, we are renovating the very sinews of our national strength. Be this as it may, without doubt, it is the duty of Great Britain to employ the influence and the strength which God has given her, in raising Africa from the dust, and enabling her, out of her own resources, to beat down slavery and the slave-trade.

"I am aware, that it is quite a different question, whether the means I propose are practicable, and likely to be crowned with success. It belongs to the nation to consider whether the suggestions now offered, and the policy which I have ventured to recommend, are likely to eradicate that mighty evil which desolates Africa, degrades Europe, and afflicts humanity. If it shall appear that my views are not chimerical; that they have some grounds of reason in themselves, and are fortified by a great mass of evidence of a practical nature; and if it shall appear, that, whether we look to the great interests of humanity, or consult the prosperity and honour of the British empire, it is our duty to proceed, undeterred by difficulty, peril, or expense; then, I trust, that steps will be taken, boldly and rapidly, for the accomplishment of the object." (Pages 525—530.)

The following passage, indicative of the agonizing sense which the Author feels of the aggravated miseries which our ineffectual attempts to extinguish the slave-trade are now inflicting upon its unhappy victims, cannot be read without deep emotion.

"But if it shall appear, that this and every other plan are likely to be futile, or if the Government shall not feel itself justified in braving the difficulties and expense which will be required, then must I express my painful conviction, that it would be better for the interests of humanity, that we should withdraw altogether from the struggle; better to let the planters of America satiate themselves with their victims, than to interpose our efforts, unavailing in reducing the magnitude of the evil, while they exasperate the miseries which belong to it; better to do nothing, than to go on, year after year, at great cost, adding to the disasters, and inflaming the wounds, of Africa. But I cannot contemplate such a result. I must hope better things."

(Page 530.)

Having given utterance to this burst of feeling, Sir Fowell thus beautifully concludes :—

“ The case is now fairly laid before the nation. It belongs to no individual, to no party ; it is a distinct and isolated question. My desire has been to lay it upon the national conscience of Great Britain. There I must leave it ; having fully stated what I believe to be the only remedy, and the best means of applying that remedy.

“ I find, in the sacred writings, a faithful picture of sorrows, such as those with which Africa is now afflicted ; but I find also annexed to that description a prophetic promise, which we must fervently desire to see realized to miserable Africa :—

“ ‘ Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Before these days, there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast ; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction : for I set all men every one against his neighbour.

“ ‘ But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the Lord of hosts.

“ ‘ For the seed shall be prosperous ; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew ; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.’ ”

Such an appeal to the national conscience and the public sympathy could not possibly be made in vain. Exeter-Hall has already borne witness to the effect produced ; and the combination of rank and talent, the union of persons of all political parties, and almost all religious persuasions, which was there exhibited, encourages the hope, that the “ Society for the Extinction of the Slave-trade and the Civilization of Africa ” will obtain support adequate to the greatness and justice of its claims. We entertain the most confident persuasion, that the hearts of our Wesleyan friends beat warm in this noble cause. It would be strange indeed, as Dr. Bunting justly remarked at the public Meeting, if a religious body which was among the first to think of the Negro, and which, during the last fifty years, has made a larger expenditure, both of money and valuable Missionary life, for Africa and her injured race, than many others have had the opportunity of doing,—it would be strange indeed, should they prove indifferent to a plan which promises to confer such great and manifold benefits upon the objects of their sympathy and compassion—which proposes, not merely to deliver Africa from one of the worst of human evils, but also to confer upon her the greatest amount of positive good. While, with ourselves, they wish success to every judicious effort to diminish the slave-trade, by lessening the *demand* beyond the Atlantic, they will especially hail a scheme which has for its object to put an end to the accursed traffic, by means of a process which, under the blessing of Heaven, will tend to raise Africa to a place among the Christian and civilized nations of the earth. Extensive pecuniary aid is, however, necessary, to enable the new Society to enter upon the noble field of usefulness which has been marked out : and our Wesleyan friends, we trust, will bear with us, while we respectfully urge upon them the importance of a *prompt* expression of their zeal, by enrolling them-

selves, without delay, among the contributors to the Society's funds; and by uniting with their fellow-Christians and philanthropists of other names, to form Auxiliary and Branch Societies, for the diffusion of information in their respective neighbourhoods, and for enlisting the public generally in the support of the cause. Nor must prayer—earnest, believing, persevering prayer—be neglected. The greatness of the task to be performed, and the multiplied difficulties to be surmounted, might well induce despondency, were we unduly to rely on human means. But with God all things are possible: and, in answer to prayer, his blessing will not be withheld; the word of promise shall be accomplished; and Africa, as a part of that renovated world which we now contemplate in the bright visions of prophecy, shall blessedly participate in the fulfilment of the prediction respecting Zion's prosperity:—"He will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord."

NOTE.

SINCE the preceding pages were penned, a letter has appeared in the public journals, written by a distinguished naval Officer—Sir Robert Hagan—who has been several years in command on the coast of Africa; and as it bears such decided testimony to the accuracy of the painful statements of Sir Fowell Buxton, respecting the horrors of the slave-trade, and expresses so decided an opinion in favour of his plan for its extinction, it is copied entire, from the persuasion, that the opinion of such a high authority ought to be generally known.

"GENTLEMEN,

"UNCONNECTED as I am, by birth and property, with your great county and city, and known only to you through the medium of my official situation here, some apology would be due for addressing the public, through you, in the columns of a newspaper, did I not feel that a subject I address you on must shortly, if it has not already, enlisted the sympathies of every Christian, and that the testimony of the humblest individual, in favour of the efforts now making in England for the long-oppressed African, cannot but be acceptable to you and every well-regulated mind.

"It is, therefore, with the hope that your great city and county, ever ready to the call of humanity, will not be slow in responding to that made by the Meeting over which our illustrious Prince recently presided, that I would earnestly entreat the public to peruse the work of that great philanthropist, Mr. Buxton. My service of eight years on the western coast of Africa, in command of Her Majesty's vessels, when it fell to my lot to capture forty vessels, having on board four thousand two hundred human beings, enables me to declare, that the horrors of the slave-trade, as described in that book, so far from being exaggerated, (as those unacquainted with the subject, and Mr. Buxton, might suppose,) are, in truth, underrated. I can, with perfect sincerity, assure you, that no pen can portray, no tongue, however eloquent, can

describe, half the horrors of that most iniquitous traffic. For these enormities a remedy is proposed, which my experience enables me to say, is perfectly practicable ; but it will require the co-operation, assistance, and countenance of the wealthy, the influential, the benevolent, indeed, of every good man. Your great county and city, will not, I feel assured, be backward in a cause so sacred, when fully informed on the subject. Mr. Buxton's work, published at a cheap rate, will give this information. I earnestly recommend the perusal of it by every individual.

" I am, gentlemen,

" Your most obedient servant,

" R. HAGAN.

" Cove,

" June 18th, 1840."

THE END.

